(54) Title: INTEGRATED ELECTRONIC PARTS WAREHOUSING AND DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM AND METHOD

(57) Abstract

An integrated parts ordering system and method and warehousing system and method is provided. The parts ordering system and method employs computers (34, 36, 38) to allow a buyer to obtain information about particular parts maintained in the warehouse system (32). The parts are owned by a plurality of suppliers. The price of the parts, quantity in stock, and other information is provided to the buyer by the system. An electronic purchase order may be prepared and transmitted to the central computer (38). The central computer (38) may also be used to maintain and control inventory in the warehouse system (32). The central computer (38) can generate picking lists and verify buyer's orders for shipment. A method and system is also provided for electronically transferring funds to cover payments for items purchased by electronic purchase order and filled by the warehouse system (32).
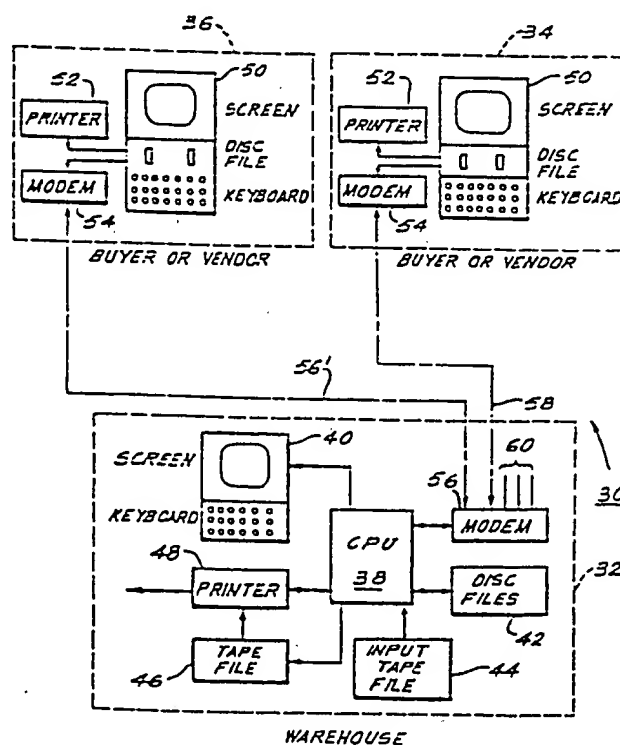
    b)   providing means for electrically transmitting
and receiving signals between each of said
vendor I/O devices and said computer; and

    c)   displaying on said screen of one of said
vendor I/O devices the number of times said
vendor's name was displayed to a buyer.

13.   A warehouse system comprising:

    a)   pre-programmed computer means for storing and
retrieving the identities and locations of
physical items offered for sale by a
plurality of vendors and maintained within a
single storage system; and

    b)   rack means for storing said physical items in
said single storage system.

14.   A system according to claim 13, wherein said pre-programmed computer means is further programmed for:

    a)   automatically determining and displaying
random locations for storage of said physical
items in said rack means;

    b)   electronically accepting orders from buyers
for said physical items maintained within
said single storage system;

    c)   generating picking lists which direct
pickers to the locations of said
physical items in said rack means and
which correspond to said orders; and

    d)   storing and retrieving shipping procedures
and locations for shipment of said orders
when completed.

15.   A system according to claim 13, further comprising
second rack means for storing open containers of said
physical items.

16.   A system according to claim 13, further
comprising:

    a)   scale means for determining the quantity of
said physical items when filling said orders;
and

    b)   conveyor means for transporting said physical
items to said scale means.